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538 Abkhazeti and finally returned to Tiflis, where Nersé made his
776 submission to the Arab Emir. Also lived for three years in peace, but the fact that he was a renegade from Islam finally came to the ears of the Emir, and a painful death removed the poor young perfumer to the calendar of Georgia's Saints.

● 814 The pursuit of historical studies was a minor interest of the Georgian monkish class, but with the patronage of the Georgian kings and of the lesser territorial magnates, the writing of chronicles and chronologies and the translation of Byzantine historical works became a favoured occupation.

Wakhtang VI of Kartli, an unfortunate king but an enthusiastic student, caused many of the early chronicles to be collated, and in the first decade of the eighteenth century this work of revision and completion of *Kartlis-Tzkhovreba*, or the *Life of Georgia*, was finally accomplished. *Kartlis-Tzkhovreba* is generally referred to as *The Georgian Annals* and is to be distinguished from the historical work of Wakhtangi's son, Wakhushti, which includes also local histories of the different Georgian principalities down to the middle of the eighteenth century. Again, the so-called *Armenian Chronicle* published by Brosset is a mediæval Armenian translation of a *Georgian Chronicle* which ends with the reign of David II.

The various existing manuscripts of King Wakhtangi's work which were made in the eighteenth century differ in certain details, and there is further an earlier manuscript of the seventeenth century, known as Queen Mary's, which indicates that attempts to co-ordinate the original sources of Georgian history had been made before King Wakhtangi's time.[1]

The earliest source of Georgian written history was a manuscript known as *The Conversion of the Georgians*, which was compiled in part by the disciples of St. Nino and in part at a latter date. A manuscript of the work attributed to the monk Mroveli, who lived at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century, was known. To the ninth century belongs an *Anonymous Chronicle*, with a short *History of the Kings, Gods, Bishops and Catholicoses of Georgia*; and to the tenth century, *The Exaltation of the Living Cross of Mtzkheta* and an account of the *Conversion of the Somekhians* (Armenians). These works are essentially ecclesiastical. In the eighth century, however, Juansher Juansheriani wrote his *Narrative of the House of Wakhtang Gorgasali* (Gurgaslani), and the eleventh century saw *The Chronicles of Sumbat*, in which Sumbat Davitisdze

[1] For the sources of the *K.-Tz.*, see the works of Th. Jordania, Javakhishvili, Tsqaishvili, Kekelidze and Janashvili.

814 recounts the deeds of the Bagrationi family; and the *Abkhazta Tzkhovreba* or *Life of Abkhazeti* compiled by King Bagrat III.

An anonymous eyewitness described the life of King Gioagi II and also of his son David Aghmashenebeli. The writer was obviously a contemporary and a familiar of the Court ("*all this we saw with our own eyes*"), and his intimate account of the literary habits of the great Restorer is worth quoting, both as indicating the position of the writer and as an illustration of the studious way of the Georgian Court of the first quarter of the twelfth century.

> "He loved tenderly all that pertained to the Scriptures, ancient and new, translated from other tongues into Georgian. . . .
>
> "Day and night in his comings and his goings, in his ceaseless expeditions, in his work, which was for him, without rest as well as without weariness, books—with which he always loaded several mules and camels—constituted his pleasures, his feasting and his daily exercise. The moment he dismounted from his horse, he armed himself, before all, with a book, and did not quit reading it except from weariness. After the evening meal instead of sleeping or occupying himself in some other way, he began to read again. If his eyes were weary he replaced them with his ears and then as a listener, not distrait, but always extremely attentive, he would analyse, question, or would explain the value and intrinsic meaning of the Texts.
>
> "I will cite another instance of his love of books . . . often he would place before him and read the Apostles; when he had finished he made a mark at the end of the book, and at the end of the year he counted the marks, by which means we found one day that he had read it twenty-four times."

For the reigns of Giorgi III and Queen Tamara there is a further account of an anonymous eyewitness. The style is official and the language is that of the ecclesiastical works of the period. Janashvili suggests that the account of these reigns was probably compiled by the Dchqondideli—the Bishop of Dchqondidi—who was *Mdsignobart-Ukhutsesi*.

The period of the Mongol wars was covered by the writings of one who, from internal evidence, was a native of Samtzkhé. He was of an independent mind, and he does not hesitate to criticize Giorgi Lasha and Rusudani. He was acquainted with the Mongol language, and consulted other chroniclers of the time ("*as the monks of Mghvimé write*"). For the fourteenth century there is also the *Dzegli Eristavta* or *Monument of the Eristavni*—a sort of family history of the Eristavni of the Ksani with some account of the history of the Ossetians.

The fourteenth century is badly documented and "the ancient history" of Georgia is brought to an end by the compilers of *Kartlis-Tzkhovreba* with the death of Giorgi

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517 The Mongol, Turkish and Persian wars seared the vivid intellectual life, as they scarred the valleys of the Georgian Kingdom. The first Renaissance of the twelfth century flowered in Georgia, as in the West—but ruin choked the delicate growth of a splendid and an individual culture. Sargis Tmogveli, poet and philosopher, was the last representative of a school of originality and promise.

In the seventeenth century, Chardin, in his none too friendly appraisal of the Georgians, allows himself to say that they—

> "Are Naturally very Witty, Nor would there be more Learned Men, or more Ingenious Masters in the World, were they best improv'd by the knowledge of Arts and Sciences." [1]

• 814 Even when he wrote, a few rare spirits were preparing the meagre Georgian Renaissance which struggled to overcome the political conditions of the early eighteenth century. King Wakhtangi imported the first printing-press from Wallachia and in the midst of invasion and petty revolts inspired the revision of the historical and juridical works which bear his name. His son, Wakhushti, pursued his father's courses. After some soldiering and politics in Georgia, he settled down, an impoverished refugee in Moscow, living with a large family in lodgings in the Presna Street, a neighbourhood which was for generations much favoured by the Georgian community. He interested himself in the production of the beautiful Georgian edition of the Bible, which was published in Moscow in 1742. He dabbled also in religious and philosophical studies, but his real and valuable contribution to the advancement of knowledge was the work which he completed in 1745—*The Geographical Description of Georgia*. The work contained a long introduction on the customs of the Georgians, and a consideration of the country in provinces, with a mass of topographical detail and twenty-two manuscript maps. As a production of the mid-eighteenth century, the whole geographical work of Wakhushti not only represented a great advance on any other material which had been written up to that date, but it may certainly be regarded as among the most competent and scientific productions of the time.

The same period saw the revival of the exact sciences in Georgia. Saba Sulkhan Orbeliani travelled in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century; he composed the first Georgian dictionary and himself illuminated it; and in his *Book of Wisdom*

[1] *Chardin* (1686 ed.), p. 190.

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and Lies he showed that the light shrewd wisdom of the old Georgian epics was still a living thing.

In the eighteenth century, the Catholicos Anton I revived the studious traditions of the Church by a series of devotional and educational works; and King Irakli of Kartli, in the third quarter of the century, continued amidst wars and tumults, the enlightened literary patronage of Wakhtang VI.

Some reference has already been made to the great school of epic poets which flourished in Georgia between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. The famous names are associated with the reign of Queen Tamara, but the poetry of the Georgians had a long history before it flowered into the glories of the Tamaran epoch. The earliest of Georgian epics is that known as *The Wisdom of Balavari*. The tale is of a wise hermit, Balavari, who converted to Christianity an Indian prince, Iosapha, in spite of the angry persecutions of his father Aveniri. The tale of *The Wisdom of Balavari* or *Barlaam and Joseph* had widespread fame through Europe in the Middle Ages. Whether the Georgian version was the original, or only one among the many others, remains in doubt. The tale was first carried into Europe through a Latin translation from the Greek made by the monk George of Trebizond, and about 1230 Abbot Guido in turn rendered it into German. French, Italian, Swedish, Czech and Polish versions followed and finally it appeared in Iceland as the *Varlaams-saga*.

The story of *The Wisdom of Balavari* seems to be a monkish interpretation of the life of Buddha. Now Georgian knowledge of India was fairly extensive even at an early date, as a result of the service of Georgian contingents in the armies of the Sasanids. There are frequent references to India in the Georgian Annals and the mediæval poets show a considerable knowledge of Indian life. The tale was popular in Georgia from an early date, and it seems probable that it was originally carried into the country by Georgian monks from Jerusalem some time in the seventh century. There are indications that it was translated from Georgian into Greek by Saint Evthimé in the tenth century.[1] There were doubtless other popular epics in Georgia before the days of the great poets, and they would have been passed from mouth to mouth as is *The Man in the Panther's Skin* among the peasants to this day.[2]

The earliest of the epic poems of the twelfth century was

[1] For detailed discussion see Khakhanov, Vip. II, pp. 82–116.

[2] I have met officers, soldiers and peasants who can recite long pieces. It is in many cases their only and a sufficient literary education.

TRANSCAUCASIA

The Soviet Government remembered very conveniently,[1] that there were old Georgian national claims against Turkey which Bolshevism had persistently ignored during 27 years, but which could easily be revived to embarrass the Turks. Two Georgian professors, S. N. Dzhanashia and N. Berdzenishvili, started the job by publishing a long learned article in the Tiflis newspaper *Kommunisti* on December 14th, 1945. In this article, entitled 'Our Lawful Demands to Turkey', the two Georgian historians claimed for Georgia all territories which Georgia had lost from the Middle Ages onwards. They included, in particular, a coastline 170 miles long on the Turkish shores of the Black Sea.

The Georgian professors said 'We appeal to world public opinion concerning our ancient lands wrested from us by Turkey. This is not a matter of an insignificant territorial infringement, but of the seizure from us of the cradle of our individuality as a nation; of a crime which cut in two the living national body. . . . The Georgian people must get back their lands which they never gave up and cannot give up'.[38]

The world outside Georgia would never have learned of this re-birth of an outspoken Georgian national imperialism, had not the Moscow newspaper *Pravda* reprinted the entire article in Russian translation a few days later.

What the historians had started was carried on by poets and playwrights. Thus Grigol Abashidze, co-author of the Georgian national anthem, wrote a collection of poems, *On the Southern Border*, in which he passionately advocated the reunion of the Georgian territories of Turkey with the Georgian motherland. North-Eastern Anatolia appears in Abashidze's poetry as the Georgian Province of 'Tao'. In one of his poems Abashidze promised that 'Tao' including the two ancient cultural centres of the Georgian people, Khandzta and Tbeti, would become Georgian again:

Tao, O Tao, our country thou,
Cradle thou of Georgian glory!

Ploughland of my forebears' furrows,
Brooded o'er by ancient towers,
How wast thou beset by sorrows
'Ere decay befell thy flowers!

Tao, O Tao, I hear thee, Tao,
Hear thy weary sighing dying.

Khandzta weeps and Tbeti murmurs;
Brothers' hearts there turn towards us.
One day Tao will join our numbers
'Neath the flag that proudly guards us.

1. [i.e. in launching a "diplomatic offensive against Turkey after World War II - Analyst]